



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Transatlantic Programs Center

## *A look at our past*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has had functioning organizations in the Middle East and Africa since the early 1950s. The organizations have existed in different locations, and under different names, but always with a constant mission: to provide engineering design and construction management services to support U.S. policy and defense objectives overseas.

- Mediterranean Division, 1952-1976
- Middle East Division, 1976-1986
- Middle East/Africa Projects Office, 1986-1991
- Transatlantic Division, 1991-1995
- Transatlantic Programs Center, 1995 to the present

The Corps of Engineers has a rich history of support to our nation and its military forces in vital overseas regions.

### *Mediterranean Division 1952-1976*

In the early 1950s, the Corps was tapped to manage military construction projects on behalf of the U.S. Air Force in Turkey. The program expanded to include air base work in Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco. As the U.S. government programmed aid to strengthen the military forces of selected American allies, the Corps constructed military facilities in Pakistan and Iran. Further U.S. programs provided economic assistance, resulting in non-military projects such as civilian air terminals in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran; a road system in Afghanistan; and port facilities in Somalia.

As the division's work evolved, the mid-1960s saw projects in northeastern Africa and the NATO countries of Southern Europe. Projects were accomplished for the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, and Agency for International Development. The division completed projects in Greece, Turkey, Italy, Ethiopia, Somalia, Libya, and Saudi Arabia.

The division became increasingly involved in Saudi Arabia as the decade progressed, with design and construction of a countrywide black-and-white television system and a radio station complex. The Engineer Assistance Agreement, signed in 1965 between the U.S. and Saudi Arabian governments, allowed for the Corps to assist the Kingdom with its military infrastructure development. This emerging work necessitated a major organizational change in the Corps of Engineers: military construction in the NATO countries of southern Europe was assigned to the Europe Division (formed in 1974), and a new division would replace the Mediterranean Division for the Middle East work.

### *Middle East Division 1976-1986*

On April 20, 1976, the Middle East Division was activated. To meet the demands of the burgeoning engineering program in Saudi Arabia, all fully funded by that nation, the unit was organized:

- With its headquarters and full division staff in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- Three districts – Riyadh, Jeddah, and Al Batin, to supervise construction programs throughout the Kingdom

## *History - continued*

- An Engineer Logistics Command responsible for directing and coordinating all logistics activities
- An Ordnance Program Division that worked with the Saudi Arabian Army Ordnance Corps in operating and maintaining its logistics systems for wheeled and tracked vehicles
- And a rear echelon near Winchester, Virginia, to manage the large volume of design work and to award contracts.

The Corps assisted the Saudi Arabian government with a \$14 billion design and construction program that included military cantonments, headquarters complexes, housing, air bases, navy bases, port facilities, hospitals, training centers, schools, and all associated utilities and roads. Concurrently, a cadre of Saudi Arabian engineers participated in a training program, designed to help them manage their national programs. The program concluded in 1988.

This construction formed a portion of the major infrastructure that supported U.S. military operations in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War.

### *Middle East/Africa Projects Office 1986-1991*

As the program in Saudi Arabia drew to its expected closure, the Corps reorganized to meet the changing workload. The Rear Echelon in Winchester evolved into a headquarters unit, serving customers throughout the Middle East and Africa. On September 30, 1986, the Middle East/Africa Projects Office (MEAPO) was formed as a district-level element of the South Atlantic Division.

MEAPO had a large geographic expanse. In Oman, it managed the design and construction of facilities for use by U.S. forces, with permission of the Sultanate, at four locations. This work totaled approximately \$300 million.

Under the Defense Department's foreign military sales program, the organization supervised impressive military projects in Egypt, Bahrain, and Kuwait, with smaller projects in Sudan and Liberia. Under a U.S. security assistance program, the Corps' involvement in the Africa Civic Action Program began, with technical and procurement services provided to host nation military forces engaging in beneficial projects for both military and civilian sectors of their populations.

Additionally, MEAPO served the Voice of America with its modernization program to upgrade broadcast stations overseas and the worldwide Defense Department asbestos abatement program that continues to this day.

### *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*

Within days of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, MEAPO began its deployment to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to provide design, construction, and real estate nearly \$300 million, and executed leases with private Saudi Arabian land owners and businesses, totaling \$135 million in annual rental fees.

## *History - continued*

Under an agreement with the Saudi Arabian government, construction requirements were handled cooperatively between the Corps and the Saudi Joint Forces Support Unit. Projects included life support areas, dust palliative applications, aircraft parking aprons, heliports, helicopter wash and refuel aprons, field sanitation facilities, vehicle wash rack stations, and modular buildings. An environmental assessment was completed and hazardous wastes collected and disposed of.

The Corps closed its operation in Saudi Arabia in support of the Gulf War on March 31, 1992.

### *Transatlantic Division 1991-1995*

International events in Europe and the Middle East prompted the Corps to realign the overseas elements serving these regions. In February 1991, the Transatlantic Division was formed with its headquarters in Virginia, and its single district – Europe – in Germany. In addition to its established engineering missions, the first half of the decade brought tremendous challenges to the Transatlantic Division:

- Assisting Kuwait's government with its recovery operations after it was liberated from Iraq.
- Assisting with Operation Provide Comfort, providing relief to Kurdish refugees in Turkey and northern Iraq.
- Expanding its engineering support to U.S. Central Command, a major unified command, for its operations in the Middle East.
- Working in the former Soviet Union for programs ranging from embassy renovation to assisting with projects that reduce the threat of chemical and nuclear weapons.
- And developing, awarding, and administering the Army's Logistics Civil Augmentation Program contract from 1992-1997, used to provide logistics and engineering services to U.S. forces deployed to Somalia, Rwanda/Zaire, Haiti, the Middle East, Italy and the Balkans.

In 1995, the Transatlantic Division was renamed the Transatlantic Programs Center. Another organizational change in 1998 reassigned Europe District to the North Atlantic Division.

### *Kuwait Recovery Operations*

The Corps established the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office in January 1991, as part of the Transatlantic Division, in response to an assistance request from the Kuwait government. Working with Kuwait officials and volunteers, the Corps helped with the planning and restoration of certain facilities and systems that were badly damaged during the Iraqi occupation of that nation. Repairs were made according to the priorities established by Kuwait officials and were fully funded by that nation.

Civil repairs included repairs to electricity, water, and sanitary systems; public and state buildings, including the Parliament; and roads and transportation systems, including the international airport. Defense repairs included minimal emergency work at select sites and extensive restoration at Kuwait's two air bases to bring them up to a minimal level of operations.

Work was divided into two periods:

- The emergency phase, designed to restore essential services (electricity, water supply, and transportation corridors) to meet the immediate health, safety and security needs of the population.

## *History - continued*

- The recovery phase, highlighted by projects that returned normalcy to those systems repaired or put in place during the emergency phase. The work included more permanent repairs to systems and facilities and lessened as Kuwait ministries resumed normal operations.

The civil restoration effort resulted in construction contracts totaling \$330 million during a 16-month period. The air base work was valued at \$131 million.

### *Transatlantic Programs Center*

Today, the Transatlantic Programs Center provides quality, responsive engineering, construction, and related advice and services to designated customers within its assigned area of responsibility. The work is carried out in the Middle East, Africa, Russia, the Central Asia States, and in other areas as called upon.

The Transatlantic Programs Center and its predecessor organizations have served the Army and the Nation since the 1950s. Its team members are proud of the engineering accomplishments that have contributed to the Corps of Engineers' reputation as a premier provider of public engineering services.